

## Resumo

Este artigo aborda o trabalho das artistas mulheres Mizrahi, i.e., mulheres judias israelitas de origem étnica asiática ou africana, tomando como caso de estudo a artista Vered Nissim. Nissim procura afirmar as políticas de identidade e reconhecimento, bem como o feminismo, de forma a criar uma alteração de paradigma em relação ao regime local de representações culturais na cena artística de Israel. Tentando encontrar modos de colocar em questão os rígidos desequilíbrios entre diferentes grupos sociais, a artista apela a uma reforma abrangente do status quo através do activismo artístico.

Nissim emprega um estilo, conteúdo, e médium que perturba a ordem social aceite, utilizando o humor e a ironia como ferramentas únicas com as quais liberta convenções morais, sociais e valores económicos. Colocando questões de raça, classe e género no centro do seu trabalho, procura minar e problematizar atitudes essencialistas, sublinhando as intersecções políticas de diferentes categorias identitárias enquanto a análise crítica da interseccionalidade se desdobra. ●

## Abstract

This article addresses the work of Mizrahi women artists, i.e., Israeli-Jewish women of Asian or African ethnic origin, using the artist Vered Nissim as a case study. Nissim seeks to affirm the politics of identity and recognition, as well as feminism in order to create a paradigm shift with regards to the local regime of cultural representations in the Israeli art scene. Endeavouring to find ways of undermining the rigid imbalances between different social groups, she calls for a comprehensive reform of the status quo through artistic activism.

Nissim employs a style, content, and medium that disrupts the accepted social order, using humour and irony as unique weapons with which she takes liberties with conventional moral, social, and economic values. Placing issues of race, class and gender at the centre of her work, she seeks to undermine and problematize essentialist attitudes, highlighting the political intersections of different identity categories as the critical analysis of intersectionality unfolds. ●

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## palavras-chave

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# BREAKING THE PATTERN AND CREATING NEW PATHS – FEMINIST MIZRAHI WOMEN ARTISTS IN ISRAEL

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<sup>1</sup> Mizrahi women artists were discussed for the first time as a cultural-political group in the year 2000 as two groundbreaking exhibitions were held in Israel: “Achoti – Mizrahi Women in Israel” (Jerusalem) and “Mizrahiout” (Tel Aviv). Scholar Ktsia Alon writes that “These [two] exhibitions provided the term Mizrahiness with a visual concretization, and was practically implemented in the Israeli cultural field” (Alon 2013, 276). Since then, several exhibitions of Mizrahi women artists were held throughout the country, further establishing their visual presence.

<sup>2</sup> The category “Mizrahi” refers to many ethnic groups in Israel, such as Ethiopian, Moroccan, Iraqi, etc., that are politically affiliated and mentioned together as being non-Ashkenazi subjects (implementing “strategic essentialism”).

<sup>3</sup> These important observations were made as early as the 1970s by feminist art critics in various countries. Discussing the reasons for the “delayed” critical debate of these issues in the Israeli field in general and the field of art in par-

This article discusses feminist ideologies reflected in the art of contemporary Mizrahi women,<sup>1</sup> as they challenge the Israeli art world and society as whole with a critical stance while constructing new artistic ways of articulating Mizrahi subjectivity. The Hebrew term “Mizrahi” refers to Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin.<sup>2</sup> Although this community forms one of the two largest Jewish groups in the country, the dominant, hegemonic power lies in the hands of Ashkenazi Jews, i.e., those of Eastern and Central European descent (Dahan-Kalev 2001). The relations between the two embody a conflict between centre and periphery, mainstream and marginal, insiders and outsiders that is frequently marked by racist attitudes and derogative behaviour on the part of the Ashkenazi hegemonic group.

As Israeli researcher Lea Dovev observes, art always functions within a multifaceted authority that is influenced by an inter-supportive set of parameters (Dovev 2009, 5). Rather than a single structure with a sole focal point at its top, this authority forms a complex system of power circles – including economic, ethnic, and gendered components. Understanding these power relationships helps elucidate the ways in which the canon of art is determined and especially the gendering and ethnicization processes that affect artistic creation – which forms are recognized as “art” and which are excluded – and above all who establishes and maintains the classifications instituted.<sup>3</sup>

The marginalization to which Mizrahi women – and other non-hegemonic groups – are subjected within the art field is not accidental, but is a direct consequence of

gender discrimination compounded by ethnic and economic factors. Mizrahi women artists suffer from a three-fold oppression: as women in a patriarchal society, as women artists from a low socio-economic group in a hypercapitalist society, and as Mizrahi women in an Ashkenazi-dominated society.<sup>4</sup> Decades-old patterns of masculine white dominance have perpetuated an imbalance amongst artists, curators, collectors, and audiences alike (Chinski 1997; Dekel 2011). The mainstream Israeli culture has been looking to the West (Europe and the United States) for inspiration and structure, and the contours of the Mizrahi population – and Mizrahi women in particular – were determined by the Zionist-Ashkenazi gaze in the first decades after the establishment of the State in 1948. The institutionalized perception of Mizrahis as a primitive, foreign, Arab entity undergirded a policy of uprooting “Mizrahiness” in order to re-socialize that community (Mutzafi-Haller 2007, 92-93). Today, while hegemony still resides in Ashkenazi hands, Mizrahi awareness is rapidly growing and radical activism is increasingly resonating in the wider public sphere (Levy 2008). From the mid-1990s, the rise of non-hegemonic voices in the Israeli public realm prompted a discourse that seeks to expose the mechanisms through which frameworks of inequality are constructed. Mizrahi feminists, demanding radical social change and presenting identity politics in the cultural sphere, also make themselves heard within the art field as they dedicate efforts to creating political art while giving special attention to three major aspects: ethnicity, class and gender, as ways of confronting biases in the local field.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than following a liberal path of attempting to rectify the status of Mizrahi women under the hegemonic gaze, contemporary Mizrahi feminist critical discourse in the arts seeks to effect a crisis – or paradigm shift – in the local regime of cultural representations. Endeavouring to find ways to undermine the rigid imbalances, their goals are very different from those that prevailed in earlier days.<sup>6</sup> What they call for is a comprehensive, in-depth, systemic reform through artistic activism based upon the politics of identity and recognition. Contemporary Mizrahi feminist art projects highlight the importance of revealing the blind spots within the art Establishment that perpetuate inequality and thus preclude the possibility of multicultural visibility. They also endeavour to reveal the links between power structures and visibility. Over the past two decades much debate has been engendered in Israel regarding whether “Mizrahi culture and art” does – or should – be recognized as a discrete entity. Although relating to this issue as feminist Mizrahi women themselves, these women define Mizrahi identity as a political affiliation rather than as an ethnic factor that relies on an essentialist logic. Therefore, instead of analysing Mizrahi women artists and their work solely on the basis of country of origin, or on the formal or structural elements of their work, dissociated from their broad cultural context, I shall focus upon them as agents and subjects of their own history. The artist Vered Nissim is taken as a case study, Nissim being only one option for discussing a variety of Mizrahi women artists working on plenitude of subjects and media.<sup>7</sup> Feminist Mizrahi artists seek to effect a cultural revolution by achieving twin goals. The first is portraying real experiences of Mizrahi women with which Mizrahi com-

ticular lies beyond the scope of this article. For further reading, see Misgav 2014, 74; Dekel 2013, 58-59. For further reading on the correlations between economics, ethnicity, artistic production and funding resources allocated by Israeli government to Mizrahi art and culture, see the reports by the “Libi Bamizrah” coalition, aimed at revealing the imbalance of budgets allocated to non-hegemonic cultures in Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Within the feminist movement in Israel a more nuanced categorization was adopted in order to overcome marginalization of non-hegemonic groups, resulting in the “Quarters system” which gives equal representation to Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, Palestinian and lesbian women in all events and cultural projects they conduct.

<sup>5</sup> This stance can be compared with the concept of “institutional critique” promoted by such scholars as Benjamin Buchloh (1990). Starting in the 1960s and gradually becoming an integral part of the discourse, this stance is now adopted by prominent and influential figures in the art field. “Institutional critique” attacks museums as conservative and exclusive by exposing their political, economic, and cultural mechanisms. Although museums wish to present themselves as objective and non-prejudicial, this criticism demonstrates that all decisions concerning the kind of art to be exhibited are biased (cf. Fraser 2005). Contra that criticism, the criticism expressed by Mizrahi women artists is very different as they are situated on the margins of the field, their voice being expressed from outside the major, influential centres.

<sup>6</sup> See Yossi Yonah’s (2011) suggestion for re-reading art and multi-cultural society on the basis of a distinction between “solar system” and “polycentric” models.

<sup>7</sup> For a comprehensive survey of contemporary Mizrahi women artists working in Israel, as opposed to an in-depth analysis using one exemplary case study (as this article does), see Alon 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Not only does the hegemonic (white) Establishment ignore this agenda, but some white feminists in Israel also tend to reject Mizrahi feminism and dismiss its significance for society: see Shiran 2007.

<sup>9</sup> It should be stressed that Mizrahi feminist art in Israel is not a unique and isolated phenomenon, but one that maintains reciprocal relations with contemporary non-hegemonic feminist art created in other parts of the world. For further reading see Reilly and Nochlin 2007.

<sup>10</sup> For postcolonialism in the Israeli context, see Shenhav 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Following the failure of the “general” feminist movement in Israel during the 1980s and early 1990s to include Mizrahi issues on the agenda, the Mizrahi feminist movement was established in 1995: see Misgav 2014.

<sup>12</sup> See [http://www.achoti.org.il/?page\\_id=414](http://www.achoti.org.il/?page_id=414); <http://www.achoti.org.il/?p=1542>.

munities on the periphery can identify – images that never appear in the representations prevalent within mainstream art, or are distorted under the influence of stereotypes. At the same time, fuelled by their confidence in the value and richness of Mizrahi culture in general and Mizrahi women’s experiences in particular, they also look outwards and fight to establish a substantial presence and status in the hegemonic local art field. This engagement with mainstream institutions and prominent figures in the field derives from the conviction that the Mizrahi feminist agenda must be promoted amongst all segments of the populace – male and female – irrespective of their origin.<sup>8</sup> Arguing that appealing to the Establishment in this way constitutes a renunciation of the subaltern consciousness, Mizrahi women artists contend that exhibiting their work in mainstream institutions – or wherever else they may choose to show it – is a civic right rather than something to be condescendingly granted them as a hegemonic “act of grace”. Exposing Mizrahi cultural creativity to the mainstream will also enlarge and diversify the socio-cultural repository beyond its narrow hegemonic confines, these Mizrahis argue. This form of politics calls for hegemonic recognition of the cultures of marginalized groups – an acknowledgement that embodies both respect and the proper representation of cultural visibility (Walzer 2003, 53; Calderon 2000).

Mizrahi feminist artists working in Israel today register the impact of various feminisms developed in diverse parts of the world, such as the writings of the Egyptian feminist Nawal el Saadawi, and an especially important influence has been the African-American feminist movement of the 1970s. In the wake of the emergence of the African-American liberation movement, a fierce debate arose over the need to eradicate the allegedly monolithic category of “women”, leading to awareness of the dual oppression – race and gender – to which black women were subject (Dekel 2013, 77). Since the 1970s, feminists have begun asserting that the analysis of gender relations cannot be dissociated from issues of class, race, national, physical abilities, or sexual preference.<sup>9</sup> In this struggle, contemporary non-white feminists – in Israel and abroad – make extensive use of the discourse of the politics of identity and postcolonial criticism.<sup>10</sup>

In Israel, the majority of the feminist campaigns designed to improve women’s lives have been initiated by, and on behalf of, white middle-class women striving to improve their working conditions and to break the glass ceiling while lower-class women struggling to rise above the mud floor were largely neglected.<sup>11</sup> Artist Vered Nissim picks up the legacy of the marginalized women and identifies herself as a Mizrahi feminist activist. She is a member of the feminist Mizrahi movement, “My Sister – For Women in Israel”. She is also the manager of the first fair-trade shop in Israel, a volunteer in numerous grassroots activities with women and children and is involved in various curatorial projects such as exhibitions of migrant workers’ art.<sup>12</sup> She seeks to provide an alternative to the rigid canon determined by mainstream art by presenting works that undermine Israeli-Western aesthetic values and content. One of the ways in which she does this is by utilizing materials and art forms that the hegemonic art world regards

as “improper” – folkloristic and decorative art customarily deemed unworthy of inclusion in the discourse of visual culture.

One such piece is an installation (Untitled, 2014) set on the floor, its composition consists of dozens of simple, cheap, yellow rubber household gloves arranged in the shape of a circular shining sun (Figure 1). The artist explains that the sun – a symbol of bright light – here ironically creates questions regarding colour and shades of darkness (2014). Nissim’s dark-skinned Iraqi heritage seems to be pleading with the sun to brighten her dark looks and wash her black skin clean (Fanon, 1967), its warm beams casting out all the shadows of her Mizrahiness. The use of yellow gloves to symbolize the sun evokes a matrix of associations. One is the stereotype of the “hot-as-sun” Mizrahi woman – an inhabitant of the Orient that, as Edward Said asserts, “still suggests not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire ...” (1978, 188). Another is that of the sunflower whose seeds are, in the hegemonic public imaginary, consumed by oriental women lounging on sun-flooded Middle Eastern balconies – an image sharply contrasting with Van Gogh’s Western, civilized iconic sunflower. Likewise, it evokes, states Nissim, the stereotypes of kitsch and bad taste, Mizrahi woman regularly being called *freha* or “slutty” (2014).<sup>13</sup> Nissim thus employs a style, content, and medium that subverts the supposedly good taste of high art, disrupting the proper social order. As art critic Jean Fisher (2002) observes, the challenge faced by non-white artists in white societies is that of achieving active, equal acceptance. The mainstream Establishment has endeavoured to address this call by evolving a notion of cultural diversity that Sarat Maharaj calls a “struggle for difference” (2000, 34). In this context, Nissim refuses to maintain a safe distance from the mainstream, exhibiting her work in both peripheral and major museums and galleries across the country. By crossing the border or trespassing into forbidden territory she makes use of humour, wit, artistic skill and irresistible seduction. As Joanne Gilbert notes, one of the strategies used by marginal humour is subversion, which, like self-deprecation, “has been studied primarily as it is used by women ... and minorities” (2004, 20). Thereby, Mizrahi women artists like Nissim seek to affirm the politics of identity and recognition that attest to the need to present Israeli society with a “crisis”. What appears to be submission to stereotypes in this kind of humour is, in fact, frequently a “thinly veiled indictment of society” (Barreca, 185).

Highlighting the fact that the outsider is always already inside, Nissim’s provocative work addresses repressed histories and the fragile nature of contemporary assumptions regarding the position of marginalized subjects. Situated beyond the pale, as it were, of hegemonic culture, her presence disturbs, disrupts, and disorders the hegemonic social structure that tends to forge its identity by excluding and delimiting the Other – who is, however, an integral part of society and ultimately exists inside it. The cheap yellow gloves also elicit the stereotype of the under-educated Mizrahi woman who stays at home to cook, clean and take care of her large brood rather than raising the standard, Western family, and developing a career outside the home. Belonging to the lower socio-economic group in Israeli society, Mizrahi

<sup>13</sup> Originally a common name of women from Muslim countries meaning “Happiness,” in Israel *freha* has become a derogatory term for vulgar women of Mizrahi origin.



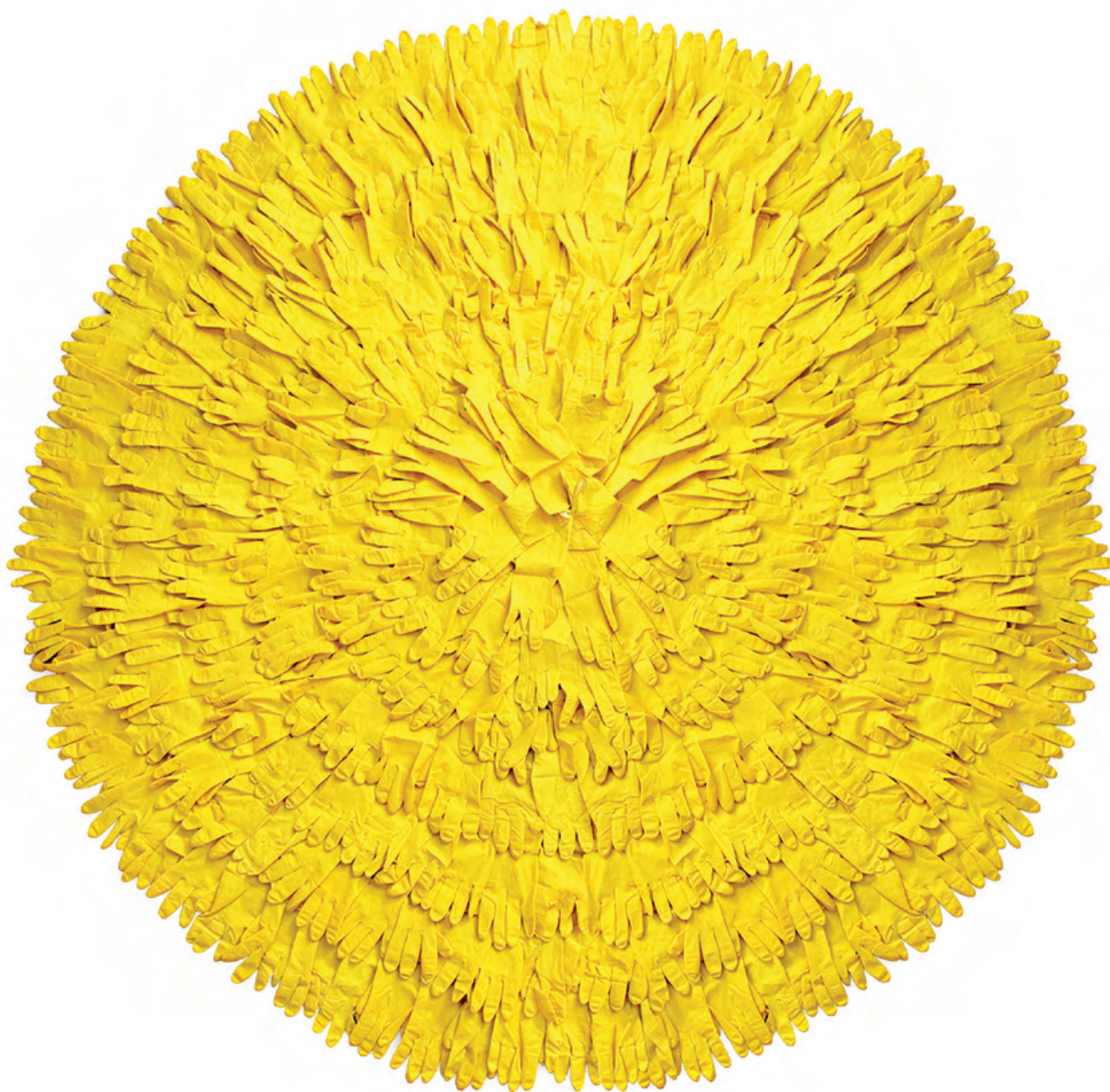


Fig. 1 – Vered Nissim, Untitled, 2014,  
Installation, dimensions: 1.40X1.40 cm (one  
part from the series "Fantasy Hands"). Courtesy  
of the artist.

women are also frequently associated with cleaning and maintenance jobs, not only in offices and factories, but also for rich Ashkenazi families. Hereby, Nissim confronts the viewers with the ever-growing gap between ethnic groups in the country as Mizrahi women are choosing, or being compelled, to work in low-paid, low-status jobs. She also accentuates the limited opportunities open to Mizrahi women for gaining a higher education and their confinement to the periphery whether geographically, economically, or culturally. Women living in peripheral areas generally do not receive a sufficiently high standard of education and often their social mobility is restricted, thus their low-income status is perpetuated. Finally, the plain, cheap yellow gloves, according to the artist herself, also bear a very personal meaning for her, as they are an integral part of the daily equipment of her mother who is a cleaning woman by profession (2014).

The use of the yellow rubber household gloves to symbolize the sun also raises the question of the tension between function and aesthetics. Manufactured to protect labouring hands from toxic cleaning products and overuse, Nissim prompts the viewer to consider whether Mizrahi women can ever be totally clean(s)ed of their blackness – or whether they are forever doomed to suffer the consequences of the power relations wielded by a hegemonic society and remain economically and culturally suppressed. Calling attention to the continuing dynamics within various social fields (Sawicki 1991) – Mizrahis and Ashkenazis, blacks and whites, impoverished and affluent, men and women – she lays bare the complex, multi-layered, intersectioned positions of the various members of Israeli society. Her contrasting of domestic (feminine) cleaning and the creation of high art in the (masculine) public space of the museum places issues of identity construction – such as racialization and gendering – at centre stage.

Nissim's photograph titled "Half Free" from 2005 (Figure 2) is a self-portrait that affords her the opportunity to embark on a multi-layered discussion of gender, race, and class dimensions. The reference is to an Israeli supermarket chain offering low-priced basic food items at outlets on the outskirts of big cities. Targeting low-income families, it is famous for its cheap plastic shopping bags. In this image, the bag with its imprinted, "Half Free", covers Nissim's face, leaving her choking for air. Both shocking and grotesque, it exemplifies Linda Hutcheon's claim that humour can subvert fossilized cultural values. Used as a unique type of weapon, humour takes liberties with conventional moral, social, and economic values. Knowing society's weaknesses and thriving precisely where the voice of authority stammers and loses its bearings at the hesitant sites of cultural repression, humour goes beyond the semantic field and is expert at linguistic manipulation (2002, 97). Placing the issue of class at the centre of this work, Nissim states that it "gives visibility to people who are invisible – the blue-collar workers" (2013). Moreover, this piece not only refers to the lower socio-economic class, but also reflects the traditional gender division of labour as women are expected to be in charge of shopping for groceries and cooking for the entire family. Therefore, this woman in the photograph, with her dark skin and bright red lipstick – an allusion to the "sluttyness"



Fig. 2 – Vered Nissim, “Half-Free” 2005, Color photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

traditionally attributed to Mizrahi women – here signals the multiple oppressions from which Mizrahi women suffer: class, gender, and ethnicity. In relating to the subject of feminine Mizrahiness via positionality, Nissim seeks to undermine and problematize essentialist attitudes and highlight the political intersections of different identity categories, as the critical analysis on intersectionality unfolds (Ngan-Ling, Texler and Tan, 2011).

In a piece entitled “Civic Guard” (2006) (Figure 3), Nissim again chose to present herself in the photograph. She is dressed in the uniform of a contracting company providing security services to major shopping centres, her dark-skinned face fitting the exploitative occupational profile of Mizrahi women in contemporary Israel. This choice draws subversive attention to the status of Mizrahi women in Israeli society – many condemned to working in temporary, exploitative jobs to ensure



the security of the population while having no financial security rights of their own. In an age of surveillance and security cameras, secret government activities and unstable security situations around the world, particularly in the Middle East, it is ironic and humorous for a woman with no proper training to be put in charge of the safety of hundreds of thousands of people visiting shopping centres. Not only are security checkpoints a common constituent in Israel, but profiling praxis forms one of the central tools for foiling potential threats. Here, the Mizrahi worker, a woman of Iraqi origin, is employed to stop and prevent the danger she herself is customarily regarded as constituting – the Arab/Other/foreigner/alien. In charge of securing the area, she symbolizes the hegemonic order as it prevents women such as herself from penetrating the public sphere and taking an equal part in the civic,



Fig. 3 – Vered Nissim, “Civil Guard”, 2006, Color photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

cultural, and economic life of the country. Stressing the fact that the image is of a woman, the artist also emphasizes her doubly oppressed position: contrasting the prestigious security jobs – those for men fighting in the IDF (Israeli Defence Force) and protecting the home front with real weapons – with the much less prestigious, unskilled, civilian job of checking bags at the entrance to a shopping mall.

As the artist explained, the piece also represents the marginality from which Mizrahi women suffer under Israeli neo-liberalism, drawing attention to the fact that security guards employed by contractors are exploited financially and possess no employment security (2014). As Israeli sociologist Orly Benjamin (2011) notes, workers in unskilled jobs – cashiers, cleaners, care-givers, security guards – are extremely vulnerable to abuse of various kinds. Contractors in Israel in particular exploit the prevailing tender system and the trend towards privatization in order to gain a greater share of the non-professional sector at the expense of those least able to stand up for their rights in terms of working conditions, additional payment for overtime, sexual harassment, social and employment security, among others.

It also reveals the ethnization and gendering processes prevalent in Israel: Ashkenazi people work in high-salary, high-status, high-tech jobs; Mizrahi people in low-paid, low-status, low-tech jobs. Compounding the gender aspect is the fact that, according to recent statistics, 70% of minimum wage jobs in Israel are filled by women (Markovich and Alon 2006, 17). A report issued by the Mahut Centre – an organization dedicated to improving the economic status of women in Israel – entitled *Women Workers in a Precarious Employment Market* observes that: “Women who earn low wages face special difficulties that affect their lives and livelihoods as a whole ... Beyond their dire economic distress, they feel insulted and trapped. The first sense derives from the absence of any link between their work investment and pay cheques, the second from their knowledge that they will rarely – if ever – find good working conditions and sufficient income” (Buchsbaum et al. 2008, 59). Together with many others, this report proclaims that the majority of women in Israel work in low-paid jobs, resigning themselves to being exploited, frequently not even expecting to gain a fair recompense for their labour (ibid, 61; Nissim and Benjamin 2010).

Feminist Mizrahi women artists such as Nissim thus use their artwork to articulate the obstacles they face in their daily lives. Such obstacles include the inequalities and oppression from which they suffer in the employment market, the racist profiling to which they are subjected, the sexual exploitation to which they are exposed, and the degrading attitude toward Mizrahi culture in general and feminine Mizrahi culture in particular. These representations serve to draw attention to, and help to undermine, patriarchal-Ashkenazi-neoliberal hegemony. However, Nissim not only reveals the oppressive facets of being a Mizrahi woman, but also accentuates and celebrates her Mizrahiness, creating positive and powerful representations of Mizrahi women. In *Untitled*, a photograph from 2011 (Figure 4), the woman – Nissim herself – sits naked on a counter of her kitchen, her body covered in cooking oil and Kuba dumplings, a traditional Iraqi food. While this scene may be understood

as a homage to her mother – a close and important figure in the artist's life who dedicated herself to taking care of her family and cooking their favourite foods – it also reveals a fiercely critical stance against prevailing ethnic and gendered stereotypes. As Israeli curator Rita Mendes-Flohr comments, the Mizrahi kitchen is "usually presented as the only Mizrahi cultural arena, as if eating was the only activity in their culture" (Keshet and Mender-Flohr 2000). Nissim explained this piece, stating that it was meant to subvert the derogative representation of the Mizrahi woman chained to her kitchen and replaces it by presenting a young, beautiful, assertive woman who chooses to continue the matrilineal Mizrahi tradition from a new stance of a subjective agent, proud of who she is (2014). Mizrahi artists creating a self-reflexive gaze as part of their effort to construct a valid, sovereign identity is facilitated, as critic Yochai Oppenheimer argues, by their attempt to liberate their stereotypical image from that of the "ethnic Other" and renounce the polarized perception it promotes (Oppenheimer 2010, 80). Thereby, they seek emancipation from idealization and demonization alike in order to become visible subjects and agents, critically calling Ashkenazi patriarchal hegemonic society to account.

Fig. 4 – Vered Nissim, *Untitled*, 2011. Color photograph. Courtesy



Following Israeli art critic Sara Chinski (1993), I would like to suggest that Mizrahi women artists, such as Vered Nissim, situated in the margins of the mainstream art world, hold a new and important cultural function that serves to undermine the existing social order on two important levels: within the field of art and within the general public-political sphere. The first level, that of art, proves the ability of non-hegemonic groups to operate and work from the margins (bel hooks, 1990) and achieve visibility in the centres. Therefore, Nissim's art serves as a reminder of the importance of learning to pay attention and study art created by social groups – that mainstream art history seldom attends to – because rich and useful artistic knowledge lies there. On the second level, that of the general public-political sphere, the art of Mizrahi women artists can be used in order to understand shifting social processes while stressing the unique contribution of art to society overall. In contrast to other social fields, such as the political entity of parliament, where sensitive issues of the deepening social divides in Israel are in a stagnant position and seldom surface to demand an earnest discussion, art products can function as a vehicle for pushing forward urgent social controversies in an effective manner. Art pieces such as those created by Vered Nissim are radical suggestions that cannot yet be expressed in other formats of social discourse in Israel today, thus they function as an important tool that can effect deep social change – which is urgently needed. ●

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